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LB 540

SENATOR RAIKES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and members. Senator Mines, I was, as Senator Bourne mentioned, mildly opposed to his amendment. I am moderately opposed to this one. (Laughter) This is an interesting amendment to a bill on school finance. It has nothing to do with schools. It deals with increasing budget authority for all local government entities except schools. It includes one and a half amendments that were bills...excuse me, bills introduced by the Revenue Committee, both of which were killed by the Revenue Committee. So again, I don't like this amendment because it has nothing to do with schools, but more...even more so because it's going in the opposite direction for other local governments of where we are going for schools. We are restricting budget authority to schools. We're dropping the basic allowable growth rate from two percent to zero. This would increase budget authority for cities and other local governments. It makes no sense to be going these two directions at the same time and to have a school bill, a school finance bill that includes issues strictly for other local governments. So I oppose this amendment. Thank you.

SPEAKER BROMM: Thank you, Senator Raikes. Senator Janssen.

SENATOR JANSSEN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, members of the Legislature. I stand in support of Senator Mines' amendment, particularly because a portion of it was a bill that the Revenue Committee did kill, amongst others. But what the amendment...simply what the amendment does is changes the one percent to two percent that a body can exceed the limit, with a supermajority vote, 75 percent vote on that board. Therefore, under the amendment, a governmental unit could, by a vote of at least 75 percent, budget up to two percent instead of one percent more than the amount allowed in the budget limit. According to political subdivisions, the budget limits have caused problems in managing their financial affairs. In some cases, revenue is not useable because of restrictions imposed by the statutes. The change would provide political subdivisions more flexibility in preparing their budgets, but with the safeguard, the safeguard of the governing by supermajority of those on that board. You know, it's kind of hard to sit back...and I know, Senator Raikes, we're doing that to schools.